Seattle Deliberation

1057. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the fact that the deliberations at Seattle clearly demonstrated that the developed countries, instead of reducing their subsidies on agriculture, have in certain cases covertly increased them in order to ensure greater market access for their foodgrain surpluses through the expedititous removal of quantitative restrictions on imports by the other countries; and

(b) if so, what prompted Government to remove the quantitative restrictions on import and thus making India a dumping ground for the developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Government are aware of high levels of domestic and export subsidies maintained by some developed countries, which however have to be reduced as per the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. The deliberations at Seattle were meant to negotiate further liberalisation in the agriculture sector. However, as the Ministerial Conference was inconclusive no decision was taken at Seattle. The phased removal of quantitiative restrictions, including on some agricultural products is proposed in order to implement the rulings and recommendations of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) of the World Trade Organisation, which held that India was no longer justified in maintaining quantitative restrictions on imports on balance of payment grounds However, the competence to make suitable adjustments in applied tariff rates to protect farmer's interest is available to the country.

Trade with Neighbouring Countries

1058. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of items imported from neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan during the last three years and till date;

(b) the details of items exported to neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan during this period; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto keeping in view the latest development/situation prevailing in our country?